

# ***3. WHERE ARE WE GOING?***

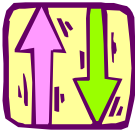
## ***Overall Vision and Strategy***

*Section 3 identifies an overall vision and strategy for ITS in the Central Coast. It presents this strategy as a progression from the regional vision and strategic direction, to ITS concepts that support the strategic direction, to specific recommended projects, to project implementation priorities. The section discusses the strategy at a regional level as well as at the county level. The importance and structure of the recommended Transportation Management Center for the Central Coast is also discussed. Several terms are explained that are key to the structure of the ITS strategy and to its relationship to the National ITS Architecture. Section 3 sets the stage for the discussion of the Central Coast Regional ITS Architecture in Section 4.*

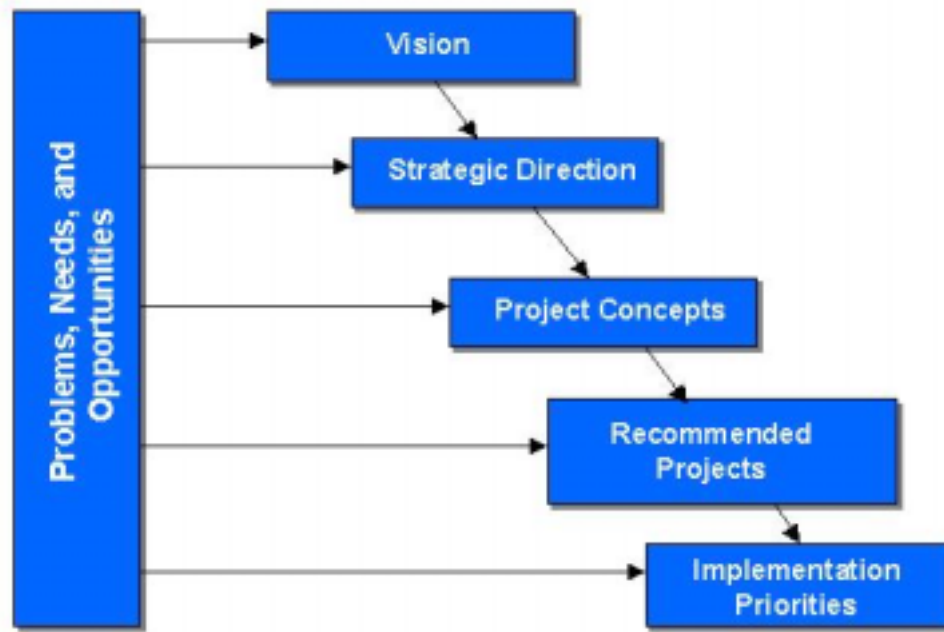
### ***3.1 FROM VISION TO PRIORITIES - A PROGRESSION***

Though ITS, in one sense, is a relatively narrow field, it has begun to permeate virtually every dimension of transportation, just as computers are permeating so many facets of everyday life. This is partly why the dimensions of ITS are somewhat difficult to grasp. Not only are there many possible applications of ITS, but these applications and opportunities are changing on almost a daily basis. What may have looked like a good strategy a year ago becomes superseded by the next major innovation. How then does one plan in such a dynamic environment? The situation cries out for a strategy, a framework within which public agencies can make decisions about the ITS strategies to invest in and when may be the right time to invest.

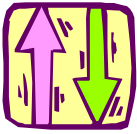
We can think of the overall ITS strategy for the Central Coast in terms of a progression from a vision to priorities for specific projects. Exhibit 3.1 illustrates the idea of a progression from the general (the vision) to the specific (project implementation priorities). A vision is simply a guide for where we want to go and, to an extent, how we want to get there. The ITS vision for the Central Coast is defined in Section 3.2. A strategic direction has been defined to support and provide additional detail to the vision. The strategic direction consists of general principles that apply as we seek to achieve the vision.



*Exhibit 3.1 - Strategic Plan Progression from Vision to Priorities*



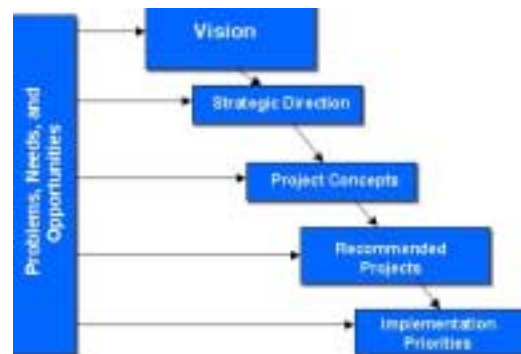
ITS concepts have been defined that are appropriate to the Central Coast, both for the short- and long-term. ITS concepts can be thought of as types of ITS projects that are not specific to a location. For example, an ITS project concept might be closed circuit television (CCTV) monitoring of traffic; an ITS recommended project would be "CCTV on U.S. 101 in the Santa Barbara urban area." The Strategic Plan takes an inclusive approach to ITS concepts, to ensure the range of possible concepts can be accommodated in the Regional ITS Architecture, even though in some cases the applications may be many years away, in some cases. Project implementation priorities then define which projects are likely to be implemented earlier than others. These priorities have been indicated in general short-, medium-, and long-term time frames, providing flexibility for Caltrans and local agencies to make adjustments in priorities in response to funding availability and overall needs of the transportation program. Chapter 3 is structured according to the progression illustrated in Exhibit 3.1. Each step in the progression must address the transportation problems, needs, and opportunities defined for the Central Coast.



## 3.2 CENTRAL COAST ITS VISION

The following repeats the ITS vision statement for the Central Coast Region:

**“ITS will be integrated into the transportation system on a strategic basis to address congestion and safety problems, to enhance emergency preparedness, to provide trip planning and en-route information to all travelers, to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of operational and maintenance functions of all transportation modes and to support transportation planning and system management functions.”**



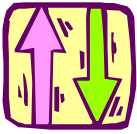
The importance of the terms “integrated” and “strategic” was discussed in Chapter 1. Because of the dynamic, evolving nature of ITS, it is important to understand the role of the ITS Strategic Plan—what it is intended to do and what it does not do. The Strategic Plan is viewed as a tool to guide agencies. It does not mandate what agencies must do, nor limit what they can do. But properly understood, the Strategic Plan can help agencies make the best use of transportation technology, providing the overall framework for purposeful, integrated ITS applications. It can help agencies avoid some of the potential pitfalls inherent in an arena for which many transportation agencies have little experience. In this respect, the following principles pertain to the Strategic Plan.

*The Strategic Plan provides the overall framework within which useful ITS applications can be achieved.*

**The Strategic Plan** exists to improve the delivery of transportation service. It seeks to provide new and better ways of running the transportation system, not merely to find ways to use the latest technological innovations.

**The Strategic Plan** shows a connection to the transportation-related problems/issues being faced by the state, region, counties, and localities.

**The Strategic Plan** reinforces the integration of ITS into the mainstream planning process. ITS technologies are just another set of tools available for the solution of recognized transportation problems.



*The Strategic Plan* envisions no significant shifts in institutional arrangements. However, implementation of the plan will require increasing institutional coordination. This will include increasing coordination between Caltrans, CHP, county agencies, local agencies, and the private sector.

*The Strategic Plan* is designed to be financially achievable. Even though this a Strategic Plan, not a financially constrained plan, the initiatives proposed must be within reason, in terms of affordability.

*The Strategic Plan* recognizes that basic infrastructure deployment is fundamental to the development of some future ITS services. ITS is generally dependent on electronic communications, and while wireline systems are generally well developed, wireless communications are changing and developing rapidly and may offer more cost-effective solutions in some cases.

*The Strategic Plan* should be viewed as a living document, one that the agencies should be ready to change as the direction of technology, transportation, and public policy unfolds.

The challenge now is to implement this technology in a series of achievable and sustainable steps, with each step building the political and financial bridge to the Strategic Plan's long range goals.

ITS deployments in the Central Coast must at the same time recognize both regional and local needs. They must recognize and respond to the needs of the Central Coast Region as a whole, individual county priorities, local agency direction, and inter-relationships with other neighboring regions and Caltrans districts. The Central Coast possesses unique geography and transportation needs, at the same time providing numerous recreational outlets and access to popular scenic/tourist destinations for the rest of the State. In addition, some residents who live in its northern (Santa Cruz) and southern (Santa Barbara) counties work in the greater San Francisco Bay or Los Angeles/Ventura metropolitan areas respectively. The role of technology in enhancing the transportation network to address these unique and interdependent needs has been clearly identified by the Central Coast agencies.